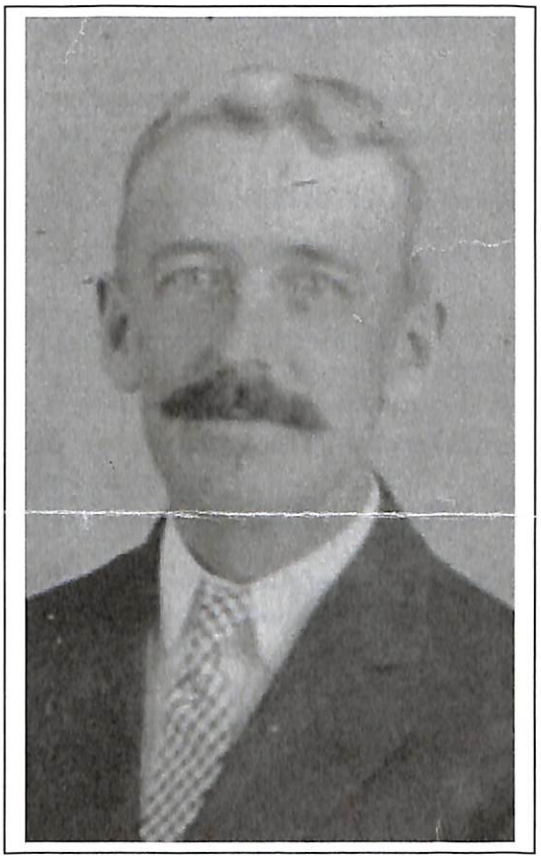
TAFT TALK

No. 58 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Jun 2010

2gt-grandparents of Brad: Narcissa A Taft (1861-1944) and Theodore P. Taft (1859-1930)



So how do we find them?

New member, Brad Lawhead, has some ideas, lots of energy, some rules (see pp 3 & 9), more ideas, and excellent research and documentation skills which govern how he approaches his search for elusive ancestors. Let him tell you how he approaches his "research brick walls" and what questions remain:

When I talk about doing genealogy research, I only hope that others are as skeptical as I am. Too many times I've run across the novice "genealogist" who questions nothing and makes connections across family generations as though millions lay in trust, or who acts like there's a prize for completing a 10-generation tree in 3 weeks. The odds are, finding out you're the long lost heir to a fortune just isn't going to happen-- that's stuff for T.V.-- and the "just add water" family tree doesn't exist except for the actual tree you planted in the back yard. Accurate family research takes months, oftentimes years, and a healthy mix of skepticism / optimism, more than a dash of ingenuity and 100% honesty! Oh, and yes, money.

In researching my TAFT family line, like many others that share the TAFT surname, I was spurred by family members to prove or dispel the relationship to president William H. Taft, to whom Grandpa Taft maintains the family is related. Whether documentation existed at any prior time that proved the connection, when I began my research none could be found. Like all research, you start with what you know: who was the TAFT in the family and who were their TAFT parents. With that done, I could easily proceed to document TAFT ancestors unimpeded through to the 1850 census. Or so I thought.

Or so I thought cont p 3

We will really miss Berneta and all her kindnesses and good deeds

To Taft Family Association Members:

As I retire as your Secretary and Treasurer, I want to thank so many of you for your kind notes received with your dues and also the family histories that were sent. I enjoyed reading each and every one, then sent along for inclusion in the Taft Tree Talks.

After approximately 14 years, I will miss my connections with all of you. However, it will give me time to "play catch-up" on many family and home activities that have been neglected.

I also want to thank Patricia Allen for her support in furnishing computer updates on membership dues, addresses to start "anew" for the next period. I will not be "gone" completely, as I will be a member of the Executive Board.

As I "sign off," I want to wish everyone my very best wishes.

Berneta M. DeVries

In Memoriam

Emma Mather (Taft) Barrows at a party in May 2009.

Emma Mather (Taft) Barrows, our Emma, was ever-present at Taft gatherings. With others of her immediate family she kept the Association moving ahead, pitching in where needed with great enthusiasm and energy.

Emma Barrows, 94, of Blackstone St., died Sun. 18 Oct 2009 in the Beaumont Nursing and Rehab. Ctr. in Northbridge. She was born 16 Dec 1914 in Mendon, MA, the daughter of Clarence Augustus and Mary Emily (Benner) Taft, and was a lifelong resident of Mendon and graduate of Mendon High School, Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, and the former Hill Business College in Woonsocket. She also attended the University of Massachusetts for two years. Emma was the wife of the late Vernon A. Barrows who died in 1988.

Emma Barrows was the Executive Director of the Mendon Housing for the Elderly for 15 years before retiring in 1979. Previously she had been employed at Taft-Pierce Inc. in Woonsocket and also assisted her family at the former Taft Orchards in Mendon for many years. She was a lifelong member of the Mendon Unitarian Church and the church's Afternoon and Evening Alliances. Emma was very active in the Mendon Senior Center and a former member of the Mendon Grange and enjoyed traveling and playing cards.

Emma Barrows is survived by one son, Vernon A. Barrows, Jr. of Edinburg, NY; two daughters, Beverly T. and her husband, Emerson F. White, and Susan M. and her husband William F. Ober, all of Mendon; one sister Helen Congdon of Mendon, five grandchildren, seven gt-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by four brothers, Robert Taft, Austin "Bo" Taft, Daniel Taft, and Jesse A. Taft and one sister Mildred Goss. She was buried in Swandale Cemetery, Mendon, MA. (info from Worcester Telegraph and Telegram 19 Oct 2009)

Emma Taft Barrows was the daughter of Clarence Augustus Taft (Austin Augustus, Amariah, Jotham, Caleb,, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Or so I thought cont from p 1

I encountered the first hurdle with 3 gt-grandparents Otis Taft (1831) and wife Jane. Not only could I not find Otis in the 1850 census, Otis is listed in 1860 as being born in England, a departure from prior censuses showing him born in NY. So I said "okay, perhaps I won't be able to prove we are related to W. H. Taft", and that was just fine, because Rule #2 (see p 3) removes all preconceived notions of fame or notoriety from my research -- I'm really just after the truth. Despite this information, and since wife Jane is shown as born in Ireland in the second enumeration of the 1870 census, it could be that it is she that is foreign-born and not Otis. I've seen more than once the freedoms enumerators take collecting data. I'm not deterred, I just proceed with my research and document findings in detail.

At this point in my research I have a few side lines of census research:

1 - Wm Taft (1840 census, Ward 8, NYC)
2 - Susan Taft (1840 census, Ward 8, NYC, next door to Wm Taft)
3 - L M Taft (1840 census, Ward 8 , NYC, on next page of census after Susan and Wm)
4 - Otis Taft (1830 census, Grand St, Ward 8, NYC)

... and some compelling death notices and a cemetery website:

1 - "Federal Mortality Schedules, Year Ending 31 May 1880" (Jane E Taft, Jun 1879.)
2 - "Barber Collection New York Deaths Newspaper Extracts, 18 Jun 1835" (Otie (sic) Taft, "This morning in 65th yr, Otis Taft 80 Grand St.") - I know that Grand St is in the 8th Ward.
3 - "New York Evening Post, 4 Nov 1841" (Lyman M Taft, "This morning Lyman M Taft in 28y. Brother in law Peter Schersten of Greene & Grand Sts.") - another reference to Grand St, is this just coincidence?
4 - "New York Times Obituary, 30 Jul 1880" (William Yonge Taft, full obit with place of burial.)
5 - With a stroke of luck I happened upon a NYC-area cemetery with a website and burial index; there I found the interment for 3gt-grandfather Otis Taft (1831). Otis now has a middle name: Otis Abner Taft (1831). I know I'll need further documentation to corroborate these findings, but it is compelling evidence since he, his wife Jane, and two of his known children are buried there.

I keep in mind that I'm pursuing a paternal parent for 3gt-grandfather Otis Taft (1831), and the above findings provide me with "likely opportunities" of lateral research that could turn up something. With the above information I am armed to request the following:

1 - Request NJ death cert for Jane Taft (wife of Otis Taft (1831))
2 - Request NJ death cert for Otis Taft (1831 - 10/28/1893)
3 - Request NJ death cert for William Y Taft

Impatience gets the best of me and I drive to NJ Archives to pull death certificates. I've budgeted for such a trip so I gas the car and head out.

BRAD'S RULES FOR RESEARCH

1) Confirm EVERYTHING! (and with more than one source type whenever possible!)

2) Remove all preconceived notions of fame or notoriety -- view only the facts!

3) Keep accurate notes on all research!

4) When research on a line is conjecture, state that it is!

5) When research on a line is proven, documented sources are REQUIRED!

6) Trust no one else's work! When sources are provided, and especially when they're not, go back to Step #1 -- if they found the source you can too -- it's amazing how many times the source being cited is someone's unsupported third-party GEDCOM conjecture (yikes!)

The death certificate for Otis Taft (1831) reveals his father is Lyman M Taft and mother is Esther (no last name.) While I'm at the Archives, I scan marriage licenses as well-- voila!, a second marriage for Otis that confirms his father is L M Taft and mother is H Winans. Incidentally, Otis married Caroline Parrott who is listed with the family in the 1880 census as a widowed "sister-in-law." Having already followed Step #7 about researching the unlikely, I immediately knew who Caroline was. That aside, Esther now has a last name: Winans. I now have identified 4gt-grandparents as Lyman M. Taft and Esther/Hester Winans.

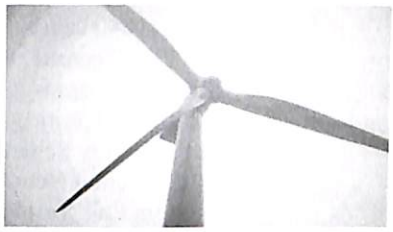
Upon returning home, I contact cemeteries for records. The cemetery interments for Otis (1831) return a Hesta Estabrook in the Taft lot. Being familiar with the many variations of Esther, one of which is Hester -- Hesta is not too far off -- it's only about half a blink before I find Hester Estarbrook with son Otis (yes, my Otis (1831)) in the 1850 census: : Otis Estarbrook. Otis is no doubt taking his step-father's name due to his age or the enumerator's lack of accuracy. This matches up to the 1840 census for L M Taft household (sex and age of individuals).

Or so I thought cont p 7

Natural Gas Tilts at Windmills in Power Feud by Russell Gold

Taft TX is in the news again this time at the forefront of the latest energy technology. "Wind power was a bit player in Texas as recently as four years ago. Today wind turbines produce a significant share of the state's electricity… A bitter fuel fight in Texas points to a … future: one in which gas and wind are foes." The state operating rules seem to benefit wind power say advocates of gas power but they should be held to the same requirements to provide payments when they fail to deliver promised power (i.e. when there is no wind).

Texas already has more wind power than any other state and is expected to double by 2013. Taft, TX has E.On's new Papalote Wind Farm with 109 wind turbines, standing 400 feet tall, is built on 15,000 acres of cotton fields. A stiff 24-mile-an-hour wind will turn into 116 megawatts, enough to power about 60,0000 homes. Top output is 180 megawatts.



Currently EOG Resources Inc., a Houston-based gas developer, pays the most taxes to the local Taft school district. E.On, the wind power, will be five times as large and is expected to pay about 1/3 of the district's entire tax bill by 2011. This new taxpayer is allowing Taft to issue $18 million in bonds for the school project which will include two new junior-high science labs.

Happy 100th Birthday Ethel!

Ethel Frances (McGinnis) Taft was born 3 Feb 1910, in Galloway Township, MO, the daughter of Daniel and Pearl "Dolly" (Armitage) McGinnis. She married 10 Sep 1931 Clarence Wilbur Taft. They were married 72 years at Clarence's death on October 3, 2003. Ethel has one living son, Gene, and wife, Mary, of Springfield, MO; three granddaughters, Patty Rye, Lake City, FL, Kori Henry, Springfield, MO, and Cheri Kowalski, Portland, OR; four gt-grandsons; four gt-granddaughters; and one gt-gt-grandson.

While Clarence was serving in the US Army during World War II, Ethel worked as a job assembler to install the automatic pilot in the B-17 fighter airplanes at Douglas Aircraft, CA and Tinker Field, OK.

Ethel is very active. She loves to bake pies and plays bridge twice a week. (News-Leader.com. Springfield. MO 31 Jan 2010)

We have a start but it's still a puzzle

Recently Clarence Eugene "Gene" Taft wrote saying he was trying to find out more about his family tree. He didn't mention his mother's birthday (see tribute to the left). Gene is the son of Clarence Wilbur and Ethel Frances (McGinnis) Taft.

Clarence Wilbur Taft was the son of Stacy Wilbur Taft and Edna Mae (Herrold). Stacy Wilbur Taft was the son of Cleon Albert and Barbara Ann (Benedict) Taft. Cleon Albert Taft was the son of Stephen James and Mary Ann (Wilber) Taft.

Information from census and death records allows us to trace Gene's line back to Stephen James Taft. At this point however there is a large question mark.

Several family trees indicate that Stephen James Taft was the son of Jesse and Sabra (Aldrich) Taft; however, Neil Todd's research indicates that their Stephen Taft was born 10 Mar 1834 which disqualifies him as Stephen James.

Various census records indicate Stephen J. Taft as born in 1826/1827/1828 in MI or VT; his father as born variously in MI, NY or RI and his mother in NY or CT. The 1900 census for TN Warren lists Stephen as born in Aug 1827 MI/RI/CT and Mary as born in Sep 1830 NY/NY/NY.

Does anyone have a solution to this puzzle?

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested. And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!

Clifton R. Brooks, MD (1923-2009)

One of our long-time members and supporters, Clifton R. Brooks, MD, passed away on 8 May 2009 in Norman, OK. He was a physician of Preventive Medicine. After a dinner with friends at a Chinese restaurant, the four determined to create Descendants of Early Quakers to further research on their ancestors. Clifton and his wife, Agnes, became founding members of the board of that national society on 10 Sep 1980.

Another find

Jan. 2010

Roy Lee Henry who sends us many interesting items states that he found another Taft artifact at an Antique Bottle Show in Attleboro, MA last January: an old medicine bottle that read "Dr Taft's Asthmalene."

A copy of an ad for Dr. Taft's Asthmalene states that it "contains no opium or other anodyne, but destroys the specific asthma poison in the blood, gives a night's sweet sleep and cures asthma so that you need not neglect your business or sit up all night gasping for breath for fear of suffocation." For sale by all druggists. … Dr.Taft's Drgs, Medicine Co, Rochester, NY

Hello Louise and thank you

Louise Taft Plumley, wrote recently and noted that she was one of seven children, her oldest brother Lloyd E Taft passed away in 2002. Her husband Bob has been sick most of the winter but is getting better, which is good news indeed. Louise will be 80 in Nov and has been married 59 years this year. She says:" We don't know where the time has gone!" Their daughter Sharon is a nurse's aide at a nursing home in town and their grandson comes to help them out. She sends the following poem to help us remember what is important:

When You Count by Dixie Lee

Count your garden by the flowers
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days by golden hours
Don't remember clouds at all;
Count your night by stars not shadows;
Count your life by smiles not tears
And with joy;
On your birthday count your age
By friends not years.

Another exotic location

Our inveterate state department traveler, Roland D. Neiss, Jr. responded to a call for volunteers for Pakistan, so he will be leaving Nassau, The Bahamas for Islamabad this month on a one year assignment. Good luck and enjoy their complex and exciting culture!

In Memoriam

Gerald B. Taft Sr. 66, of Hewitt, passed away March 21, 2010. He was born 3 Jul 1943 in Sweetwater, TX, the son of John Wesley and Clora Taft, and raised in San Angelo, TX where he attended Central High School. An active bowler and golfer, in his later years Gerald enjoyed woodworking.

Gerald Taft was preceded in death by his brothers, John Wesley, Harry, George, and Robert; and sisters, Helen Taft and Imogene Nixon. He is survived by his wife, Judy; son, Gerald B. Taft, Jr.; daughters, Sandra Brannen of Hewitt and Sherrie Taft of Austin; two step-sons, Vernon Coplen, and Brian Coplen, both of Hewitt; grandchildren, Lacey Taft, James Brannon, Jonathan Taft, Elizabeth Manczak-Taft, Deanie, William, Haley, Triston, and Tyler Coplen; and many nieces and nephews; and other close special family and friends. (info wacobtrib.com A Robinson Media Co)

John Wesley Taft was the son of George C. (Amos Fowler, Lewis, Silas, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

What treasures do you have?

Long-time member and contributor Earl L. Boughton sent us a treasure trove of items and information, including business and greeting cards for Taft's Philadelphia Dental Parlors. Even better he sent a beautiful small book, entitled "Advice to a Married Couple," by Rev. James Bean, M. AM. Published by the American Tract Society, NY. This book is 3" wide by 4-3/4" long, and 3/8" thick. On the inside is written: "This Certifies that George M. Boughton and Stella Taft were by me United in Marriage according to the Law of God and of the State of New York at the Baptist Parsonage, Triangle, Broome County, NY Jan 7, 1864."

Earl Boughton's ancestor recorded in the book mentioned above was George Myron Boughton who was born 27 Sep 1841 Barker, NY the son of David and Anna (Crofoot) Boughton and died 17 Oct 1904 in Macon, GA (see obituary below). He married 7 Jan 1864 in Triangle, NY Livonia Estella / Estella Livonia "Stella" Taft who was born 27 Apr 1845 Triangle, NY the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth "Betsey" (Tickner) Taft, and died 28 May 1921 in Greene, NY. They had three children: LeRoy Erwin 1864-1947, Lida May 1872-1875, and Elmer Berton 1877-1951. George and Stella Boughton lived in Greene, NY, where he was a farmer, and both were buried in the Sylvan Lawn Cemetery, Greene, NY.

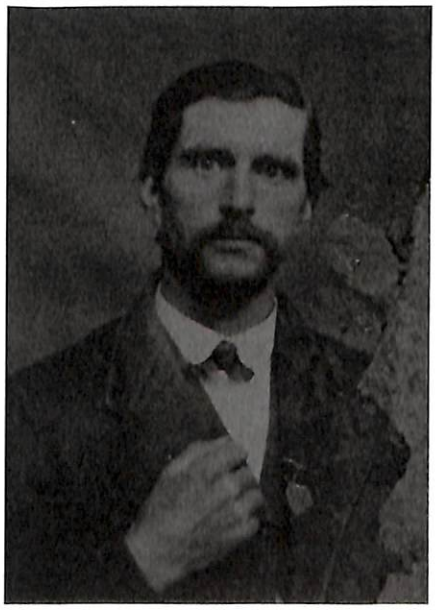
"Stella Bouton" was named in her father's will, probated 9 Nov 1867 (Bk 1 pp 515 ff). Henry Taft was born about 1801 in NY and died 1 Jul 1867 in Smithville Flats, NY. He married about 1827 Elizabeth "Betsey" Ticknor (1805-1879) and lived in Broome County, except for a brief time in Cincinnati, OH. Betsey's will was written 23 Dec 1876 at Triangle. (Toni's Tree 2009-07-01) Henry Taft was the son of Job (Silas, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

Obituary for Postmaster Boughton's Father

"Mr. George M. Boughton, father of Postmaster L. E. Boughton of Perry, died at the City Hospital in Macon last Monday morning and the body was shipped to Green, NY for interment.

"Mr. Boughton came to Perry about a year ago from Green, NY, for the benefit of his health. His health did not materially improve, but no positive apprehension was felt until about a month ago. On September 24th he went to Macon and entered the City Hospital for treatment. For a week or more favorable reports were received by Postmaster Boughton, but on Monday of last week he was notified of a change for the worse. He went to Macon Tuesday, and again on Thursday, and from this date remained with his father until death came and the body was shipped to the former home.

"Mr. George M. Boughton was 63 years of age, a resident of Green, NY where his wife now lives. Two sons also survive him, Postmaster L. E. Boughton of Perry, GA, and Mr. B. E. Boughton of Syracuse, NY. While in Perry Mr. Boughton proved himself a genial gentleman and was highly esteemed by those who knew him." (clipping sent in by Earl L. Boughton)



George Myron Boughton (left) and Livonia Estella / Estella Livonia Taft (upper left)

Please note that if your label reads 2006, you will no longer receive this newsletter. Please contact our treasurer right away, so you don't miss the next newsletter this fall. Thank you.

Or so I thought cont from p 3

However, as far as I'm concerned, Hester's burial in the Taft lot does not actually confirm her identity, and a death certificate was not available from New Jersey, so further research is necessary. Furthermore, their residence in Essex Co., NJ is not where I expected to find them.

It is not long before I encounter the Estabrook lineage, fully documenting Hester's marriage to William Estabrook in Essex Co., NJ, with references to both her maiden (Wyman) and former married (Taft) names. Using both the Wyman and Winans spellings I was able to identify a likely match for Hester's parents, Abner Winans and Margaret Heard, which I am working now to verify. I can only surmise that 'Wyman' was used for Hester's name as there are many other Wymans in this Estabrook volume; it could be a simple oversight by someone compiling the data, or by the publisher. I then run across the marriage record for Hester Taft and William Estabrook on file in NJ so I'm requesting it as we speak (Step #6 p 3).

In a simultaneous line of research, death records and cemetery records (different cemetery than the one where Otis is buried) for William Yonge Taft's burial uncover a Susan Taft in the same lot. Upon further request for detailed cemetery information (and a full year's wait and numerous phone calls for an update), cemetery records arrive for Susan that include her date of death and age at death. This new information conclusively confirms her as Susanna (Yonge) Taft, daughter of John Yonge and Suzannah King. Also in this plot is Susanna's sister, Maria Yonge, who appears in the William Y Taft household in 1880; her death date and age at death are also corroborated in the Yonge ancestry documentation. I will need to confirm the Yonge ancestry, but it looks like I'm on the right track.

These subsequent findings in the NYC Directory for 1839-1840 reveals:

1 - "Susan Taft, widow of O., 99 Thompson, page 634"
2 - "Adah Yonge, widow of William, 99 Thompson, page 728"

I had to do lateral research, but it was necessary to confirm Adah Badeau as the wife of William Yonge (1797-1833), and William as a brother of Susannah and Maria. William's death in 1833 confirms Adah's widow status in 1839-1840.

At this point in my research it looks like Susannah is a 5 gt-grandmother, but is not conclusive, I can only say that Susannah appears to be the mother of William Y Taft. More documentation is required.

Or so I thought cont p 8

In Memoriam

Leila S. "Lee" Ellis

Leila S. (Grover) Ellis, 91, of 76 Overland Rd. Greenfield, MA died Sunday evening 23 May 2010 at Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. She was born in Bernardston, MA 17 Jan 1919, the daughter of Joseph and Mabel (Taft) Grover. She was educated in Bernardston schools and was a graduate of the former Powers Institute, Class of 1937. Leila married Dean Ellis on 2 Sep 1949. Mr. Ellis predeceased her in 1979.

Leila worked early in life at Lunt Silversmiths in Greenfield, for several years at the former Singer Store on Federal St. in Greenfield and at The Recorder as an ad paste-up artist until her retirement in 1999. (Lee and your editor worked together at the Recorder for several years – she was a delight to work with.)

Leila enjoyed going to Hampton Beach in NH and to the lake in Weare, NH. She was an accomplished seamstress.

Leila is survived by her daughter Susan Goodyear and her husband Kurt of Newman, GA; a brother Clifford Grover and his wife Isabel of Bernardston; a sister Margaret Colburn of Weare, NH and many, many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by brothers Howard and Walter, and a sister Hazel. Burial was in Green River Cemetery, Greenfield. (info The Recorder, Greenfield, MA 26 May 2010)

Leila S Ellis was the daughter of Joseph Landon and Mabel Anne (Taft) Grover. Mabel Anne Taft was the daughter of John N (Isaac Burnett, Caleb, Josiah, Reuben, Joseph; Lt Joseph, Robert) Taft.

Or so I thought cont from p 7

Three additional findings and the request of two Wills help correct and confirm a vital link in the lineage:

1 - "NY Genealogical and Biographical Society, Brick Presbyterian Church records": Baptism of Rebecca Jane Taft on 7 Jun 1806, daughter of Otis Taft and Charity Watson; born 30 Apr 1806.

2 - "Personal records of the Brick Presbyterian church in the city of New York, 1809-1908": A. Baptism of Frederick James Taft on 8 Mar 1811, son of Otis Taft and Charity Watson; born 11 Jan 1811. B. Baptism of Lyman Murdock Taft on 4 Jul 1813, son of Otis Taft and Charity W.: born 13 May 1813. C. Baptism of William Yonge Taft on Jun 1819, son of Otis Taft; born 6 Apr 1819.

3 - Trinity Episcopal burial records website: Otis Taft, age 64-20-7, buried 19 Jun 1835 at St John's Burying Ground

It is important to note that a person's "age at death" is usually comprised of the year-month-day, in that order. "64-20-7" was likely not input correctly into this cemetery index since there is no 20th month of the year. Or the cemetery's documentation uses a year-day-month format. Either way, when this "age" is converted to the standard age format, "64-7-20", 64th year, 7th month, 20th day, it yields a date-of-birth of 10/29/1770, which is in keeping with the birth and death dates of Otis Taft, the son of Samuel Taft and Mary Hyde Murdock.

I am close to confirming 5gt- and 6gt-grandparents. And the location and receipt of the following Wills was vital to this confirmation.

4 - Will #1 - Otis Taft, NYC, proved 8 Aug 1835

- wife, Susannah Taft
- daughter, Rebecca Jane Taft
- son, Lyman W Taft
- daughter, Sally Maria Steele
- son, John Watson Taft
- son, Frederick James Taft
- son, William Young Taft
- son, Samuel Taft

5 - Will #2 - Samuel Taft, Worcester Co., MA, proved 26 Nov 1816

- wife, Experience Taft
- son, Lyman Taft
- son, Merritt Taft
- son, Washington Taft
- son, Warner Taft
- daughter, Marcy Olds
- daughter, Phila Craggin
- daughter, Mary Taft
- son, Frederick Taft
- son, Willard Taft
- son, Otis Taft
- son, Dandridge Taft
- daughter, Sibel Ruggles
- daughter, Perley Wills
- daughter, Experience Taft

Brad's 1gt-grandfather: Asa A. Taft (1883-1948)

The above records, combined, confirms 5gt-grandfather as Otis Taft (10/29/1771 – 6/18/1835), but replaces Susannah with Charity Watson (??/??/?? - bef 4/6/1819), as the mother of 4gt-grandfather Lyman. I list Charity's death date as prior to 4/6/1819 since that is when we know Susannah to have borne Otis's 7th child, William Yonge Taft (4/6/1819 - 7/31/1880). Divorce was rare in this era so it is more likely Charity was deceased by this date... I remain open to both options.

It was with this final record that I confirm relationship to president W. H. Taft's second cousin, three times removed, Samuel Taft (9/23/1735 - 8/2/1816), the 6gt-grandfather in this lineage. Samuel being the father to 5gt-grandfather, Otis:

1 - "Vital Records of Uxbridge Massachusetts, to the year 1850":
- "Otice, s. of Samuel and Mary, Oct 29, 1771"

I guess Grandpa Taft knew what he was talking about, but it's a comfort to be able to say this definitively, and show proof, rather than cite this as speculation.

1g-grandfather	Asa A Taft (1883 - 1948)
2g-grandfather	Theodore P Taft (1859 - 1930)
3g-grandfather	Otis A Taft (1831 - 1893)
4g-grandfather	Lyman M Taft (1813 - 1841)
5g-grandfather	Otis Taft (1771 - 1835)
6g-grandfather	Samuel Taft (1735 - 1816)

What is left for Brad to discover in this line of inquiry? Can anyone help?

While our lineage to the founding ancestor, Robert Taft of Uxbridge, appears to be in the bag, my research is far from over. I am still in pursuit of the following:

1. Charity (Watson) Taft - parents, date-of-birth, date-of-death, place of burial. Was Watson possibly her married name from an earlier marriage? As the first born from Otis's subsequent marriage to Susanna Yonge carries his mother's maiden name as his middle name: William Yonge Taft, in keeping with this apparent naming convention employed by Otis, the naming of John Watson Taft is a likely indication that Watson is Charity's maiden name. But we wish to confirm. Does anyone have access to Brick Presbyterian church records prior to 1809?

2. Based on holdings at the Taft Family Association, it is reported that Otis (1771) had a first wife by the name of 'Doyle'. Based on the separation in birth dates of Otis's first two children it is very likely Samuel's mother is not Charity Watson:
   Samuel Taft (1795-1840)
   John Watson Taft (between 1801-1810)

3. Lyman Murdock Taft (5/13/1813 - 11/4/1841), 6th born child of Otis (1771-1835). We are looking for his place of burial and children (other than Otis (1831)). From newspaper clippings we know he had a daughter Emma Maria Taft (abt 1840 - 2/7/1842): "This morning Emma Maria inf dau of late Lyman M Taft. Uncle Peter Schersten. Grand & Greene Sts." There is at least one other daughter per the 1840 census, born between 1831-35. This female individual could perhaps be a non-family member, but we're researching her as a family member at this time.

4. Robert Steele, son of Sally Maria "Sally" (Taft) Steele. Robert is not 21 at the time of Otis's death in June 18, 1835, so his birth is between 1815-1835. Based on Sarah's estimated date-of-birth using a combination of the 1810 and 1820 censuses, Sarah's birth is between 1801-1804, making Robert's earliest likely birth 1819 and his latest birth 1835. Looking for Robert's actual date-of-birth, date-of-death, place of death, place of burial; wife; in-laws; children.

5. Samuel Taft, 1st born son of Otis (1771-1835). From census and other records we know Samuel was born 1795 in NY and died 1840. We are looking for his full date-of-birth, date-of-death and place of burial. Is his mother a Miss Doyle?

6. John Watson Taft (born between 1801-1810), 2nd born son of Otis (1771-1835). John shows with the family only in the 1810 census. We cannot affirmatively identify him in any other census. Looking for John's full date-of-birth, date-of-death, wife, in-laws, children.

7. Sarah Maria "Sally" (Taft) Steele (born between 1804-1810 - bef 6/18/1835), 3rd born child of Otis (1771-1835). Sarah is referred to as Sally Maria Steele in Otis's Will. Her name could actually be Sally, but Sally is a known nickname for Sarah. We are looking for Sarah's full date-of-birth, date-of-death, husband, in-laws, children (see 'Robert Steele' above.)

8. Frederick James Taft (1/11/1811 - 2/4/1862), 5th born child of Otis (1771-1835). Frederick died in Glastonbury, Hartford Co., CT and is buried there (cemetery unknown). We are looking for his place of burial, wife Caroline M's (7/6/1811 - 4/23/1893) maiden name and parents, and more information on his children: Sarah (1832); Frederick James Jr (1836); Philura R (1838-1854); Caroline (1840); Joel C (1849-1904).

9. William Yonge Taft (4/6/1819 - 7/28/1880), 7th born child of Otis (1771-1835). William's children and their wives are pretty well documented. We are, however, looking for his wife Catherine's (born between 1821-1825 - 12/1894) maiden name and parents; and the Van Wart in-laws of his son Richard Von Houghton Taft (9/30/1840 - 2/19/1908); Richard's wife, Mary Ellen Van Wart (1/1842 - 5/1919).

BRAD'S RULES FOR BREAKING DOWN THE WALL

1) Change what you're researching to break the monotony and frustration
2) Change the research source (e.g. use the internet today, call funeral homes tomorrow)
3) Don't let frustration take over -- be creative -- try something you haven't tried before
4) Don't discount information because it cannot be proven -- list it as conjecture and work to prove it; it might lead to a break where it CAN be proven
5) Budget for expenses; you will inevitably have to fork out some cash for that death certificate or courthouse record, or a trip to your state or national archives, or a genealogy website subscription
6) Research lateral lines (great-grand siblings and their descendants, etc.); researching only the direct ancestor or decedent lines is a limiting view -- the more you see the more you know!
7) Research the unlikely (someone listed as "boarder" in a census might end up a relative)
8) Hone your skills (interpreting census handwriting / evolution of census forms / evolution of townships and counties in the state you're researching / how various website query tools work and how to use wildcards / how county courthouse records are indexed and stored, etc.)
9) Ask for help (there are others in your boat that are willing to help or provide tips)
10) Sometimes you just gotta get up from the desk and leave it for a week or two

Taft Family Association Officers

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Annual dues of $8 per family are due and payable each year on or before June 1, 2006.
(Your dues are paid through the year on your mailing label.)